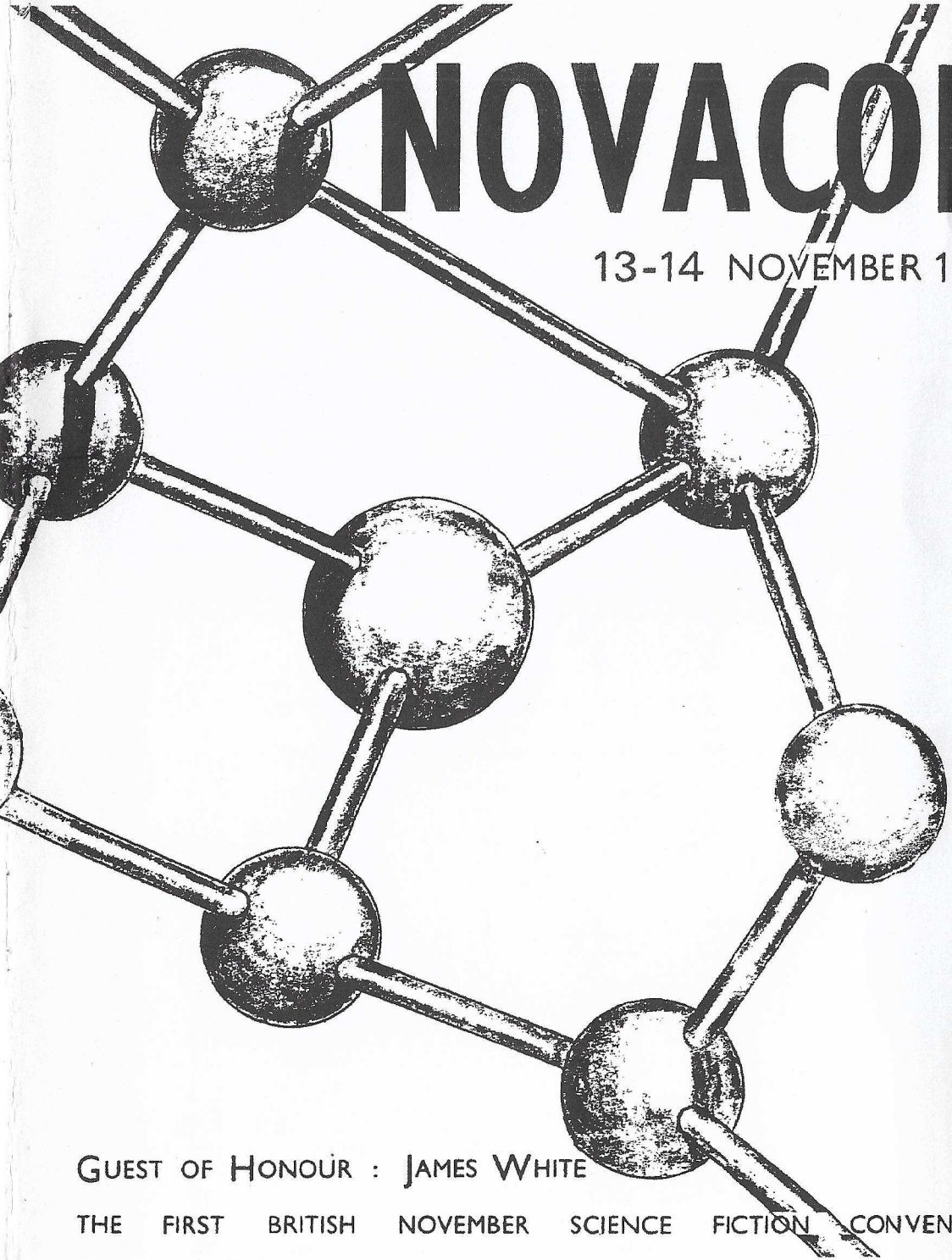
NOVACON

13-14 NOVEMBER 1971



GUEST OF HONOUR : JAMES WHITE

THE FIRST BRITISH NOVEMBER SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

NOVACON

THE FIRST BRITISH NOVEMBER SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION . IMPERIAL CENTRE HOTEL , BIRMINGHAM . 13 - 14 NOVEMBER 1971

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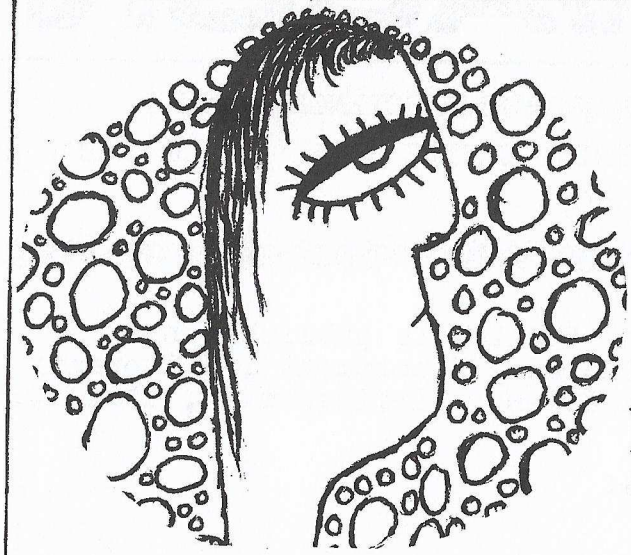
Chairman: V C Brown. Committee: R Bradbury, A Denham, A Donnelly, P E Dungate.

Thanks are due to Peter Weston for his invaluable advice , Carole Simpson for her patience and assistance and Bob Rickard for his technical expertise in the production of this booklet . Artwork for Booklet cover and Commemorative Cover by Ray Bradbury .



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THE INCONCEIVABLE

Five years ago it was inconceivable , two years ago highly improbable , today it is happening . I refer , of course , to the fact that not only am I writing an article which will be read by a fair proportion of British Science Fiction Fandom , but I am doing so in my capacity as the Chairman of a Convention .

To use an oftspoken phrase , little did I realise those many seasons ago when I first met other fans just what I was letting myself in for . I was in my very early teens when I first found SF , but it was '65 before I had my first brush with fandom - a very light brush , as I could not , in my keeness , imagine an SF gathering of any description discussing or doing anything but SF . In '67 I joined the Aston SF Group and in '69 attended my first convention - the Galactic Fair at Oxford .

Sheer admiration at this juxtaposition of hitherto unknown social events and science fiction fired the minds of all the ASFG members who attended and with great enthusiasm we attended a number of regional fantasy/SF minicons .

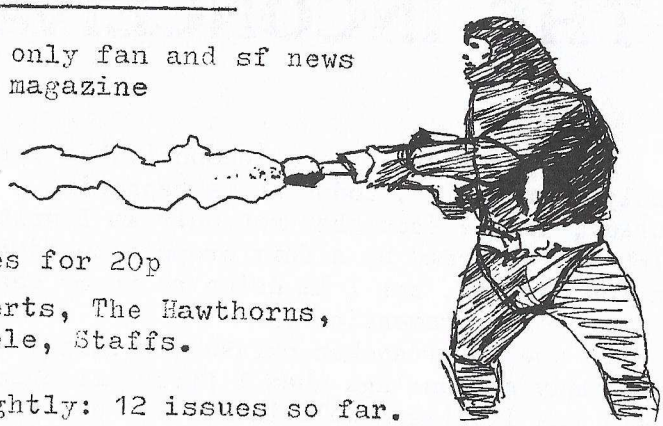
The idea of running our own con took root , but like many great ideas , did not grow until one fateful evening when members of the Group were collating "Speculation" somewhere in the depths of the Pharmacy Department . Suddenly , amid the mutter of voices and the rustle of paper , Peter Weston's voice echoed "So why not run a Con" and in a suddenly released rush of enthusiasm a committee was formed , a title chosen and a hotel and GoH decided upon .

Several of us were already involved to greater or lesser degrees with Eastercon 22 and it was not until Easter was over that NOVACON began to really gain impetus . However , at this point examinations loomed ahead for three-fifths of the committee and soon one member was in the far northern wilds of Scotland , one was in Enfield and one was busy feeding a ravenous computer with strange data concerning rocks at all hours of the day and night .

CONT....

C*H*E*C*K*P*O*I*N*T

Britain's only fan and sf news magazine



5 issues for 20p

Peter Roberts, The Hawthorns, Keele, Staffs.

** fortnightly: 12 issues so far.

Progress Reports began to appear as authors and others accepted invitations to speak at the con . After a time of much frantic activity we sent out booking forms and awaited with trepidation their return . The response was not long in coming and the long nights of recording peoples' wants began . As people were still enquiring about NOVACON and this period coincided with the start of University Term the postmidnight electricity flowed on many occasions.

The decision in September to issue a specialy handstamped Commemorative Cover meant more work still in the form of Artwork production etc ,but the resultant GPO publicity offset much of this .

With but a week or so before the con weekend the programme is finalised , the films ordered and fingers are crossed in all directions . I now understand just what Peter meant at Eastercon when he declared that never again would he organise a convention !

But , as the chap said when he was asked why he was beating his head against a wall "It feels so good when I stop". He was right - the mere thought of the 15th is intoxicating . And after all these months of preparation I doubt that I will have time to see the programme ! But you will , and the Committee and I hope you will enjoy it as much as we have enjoyed producing it .

PROGRAMME

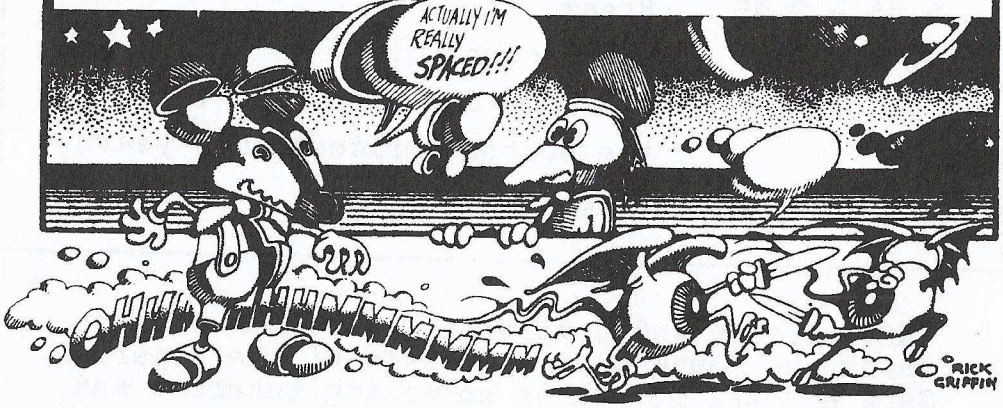
SATURDAY 13 NOVEMBER

10.00	Registration Desk opens
10.00 - 12.30	Film Programme
12.30 - 1.45	Lunch
2.00 - 2.20	Chairman's Welcome
2.20 - 3.20	"Man's Successors" Jack Cohen
3.20 - 4.00	James White , Guest of Honour
4.00 - 4.15	Coffee break
4.15 - 5.15	"Science Fiction Publications" Ken Bulmer with Panel
5.15 - 6.15	"Writing for the Screen" John Brunner with Chris Priest and Kit Pedler
6.15 - 7.00	Break
7.15 - 8.45	Minibanquet with afterdinner speech by GoH James White
8.45 - 9.15	Break
9.15	"Noreascon" Bob Shaw describes his visit to the Boston Worldcon this year
10.00 - 1.00	Film Programme

THE Chairman and Committee of NOVACON wish to thank the Management and Staff of the Imperial Centre Hotel for their unfailing interest and assistance in the production of the Convention

RUBBISH?

Did you know about the dog that said "Hallo"and then vanished? Was Earth settled from Space? What did Damon Knight, James Blish, Eric Frank Russell and others do when they were younger? Who was Charles Hoy Fort? Dare you read about the ghastly teleportation murders? Are the Lights in the skies only stars? Why does Biffo wear red braces? What about these strange falls of frogs, goo and stones?...and the spontaneous combustion of human beings? What have the Devil's Hoofprints and Vanished Civilizations in common? Are we property? Would you like to bore the pants off people with dissertations on such fun subjects as strange artifacts, poltergeists, Secret Knowledge, anacronisms, monsters and other Enigmas? Is it time for those interested in the Unexplained to stand up? If you know the answers, or think you do, or would like to, contact Bob Rickard, or someone who thinks he is: 54 Camphill, Bordesley, Birmingham 12.



FILMS

Saturday Morning	
10.00 - 10.30	Cartoons
10.30 - 10.45	Break
10.45 - 12.00	Village of the Damned
11.00 - 12.30	Jason and the Argonauts I
Saturday Evening	
10.00 - 10.30	Jason and the Argonauts II
10.30 - 12.10	The Time Machine
12.10 - 01.00	Jason and the Argonauts III

The Bar will be open for all NOVACON members between the following hours -

SATURDAY
10.30 a.m. until 5.00 p.m.
5.30 p.m. until 10.30 p.m.
SUNDAY
12.00 a.m. until 6.30 p.m.
7.00 p.m. until 10.30 p.m.

Residents , of course , may purchase drinks at any reasonable time .

JAMES WHITE

BY BOB SHAW

"James White" is the pseudonym which cleverly conceals the identity of the Belfast science fiction fan , local landmark , perennial convention-goer , and all-round Good Person --- Jim White .

His first professional sale was a short story called "Assisted Passage" which was bought for NEW WORLDS by Ted Carnell back in the early 1950s , and which was followed by a steady stream of shorts which in later years has given way mainly to novel-length works . In his regular job he works for the publicity department of an aircraft company , but he would be the last one to deny that he gets a great deal of his career satisfaction from his enduring ability to produce readable and saleable science fiction .

This , however , is not the place to review the corpus of Jim's contribution to the field --- anybody who is attending the NOVACON already knows his famous Sector General space hospital series and his many other thoughtful, amiable yarns . Instead I would like to say a few words about the man behind the penname , who has been a close and valued friend for more than twenty years .

Jim White was a founder member , in 1948 , of SLANT - one of the most famous fanzines of all time . It was hand-set and hand-printed on a small press , which---as anybody who has ever done manual composing will testify---demands an ample supply of patience , persistence and good humour. And these are precisely the qualities which characterise Jim's private and professional life . When he is doing something for a friend or business associate , that something is done immediately , thoroughly , painstakingly; and any student of his published SF can discern the same approach in the wealth of carefully planned detail he puts into every story . In these days---in which a recognised method of winning science fiction fame is to dream up an interesting situation , throw on a few pots of primary colour , then walk away and leave the whole thing ---it is pleasant and reassuring to find somebody who is prepared to give that vital something extra to the minimal requirements .

CONT....

Perhaps the reason he does so is that Jim loves science fiction and practically everything about it . He was devoted to it long before it was fashionable , he has stayed with it through all the years that SF has been "in", and if ever it should be relegated to the wilderness again he'll accompany it without question . Only it won't really be a wilderness as long as Jim and a few others like him are there.

You can experience his bonfire glow of interest yourself this weekend by simply walking up to him and talking about SF . Don't be put off by the fact that he is almost a mile high---he is used to picking out human voices filtering up from below and will always send you down a courteous and entertaining answer . The only thing to watch out for is his sense of humour---unless you yourself happen to be weird enough to think that a phrase like "Scribbans Kemp be choosers" is funny .

Anyway , it's a small risk to take in return for a chat with a genuine science fiction personality , one who has really earned the title of Guest of Honour

Don't forget the old firm

In a world overwhelmed by the ubiquitous and unsmiling Vernon Brown the unwary might easily forget the old firm.

But SPECULATION magazine is staggering into its ninth glorious year, the third SPECULATION conference will take place on 24 June 1972, and other projects are stewing nicely.

So remember - we were here first!

(Ask Peter Weston for more details)

NOVACON

lasts all through the year

With the BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

Meetings begin at 8.00 on the
THIRD FRIDAY of each month, at the
Imperial Centre Hotel.

Further details and programme from
Peter R. Weston, (Chairman)
31 Pinewall Avenue, Birmingham 30.

PROGRAMME

SUNDAY 14 NOVEMBER

10.00 - 11.30	"Present and Future Conventions" James White with Harry Nadler , Charles Partington , Keith Freeman and others
11.30 - 12.30	"The Role of Fanzines" Peter Weston
12.30 - 1.00	Auction
1.00 - 2.30	Lunch
2.30 - 3.30	"Pantropy vs Terraforming" James Blish with Jack Cohen and Dr Johnson
3.30 - 4.30	"Robots and Robotics" J F Young
4.30	END OF OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

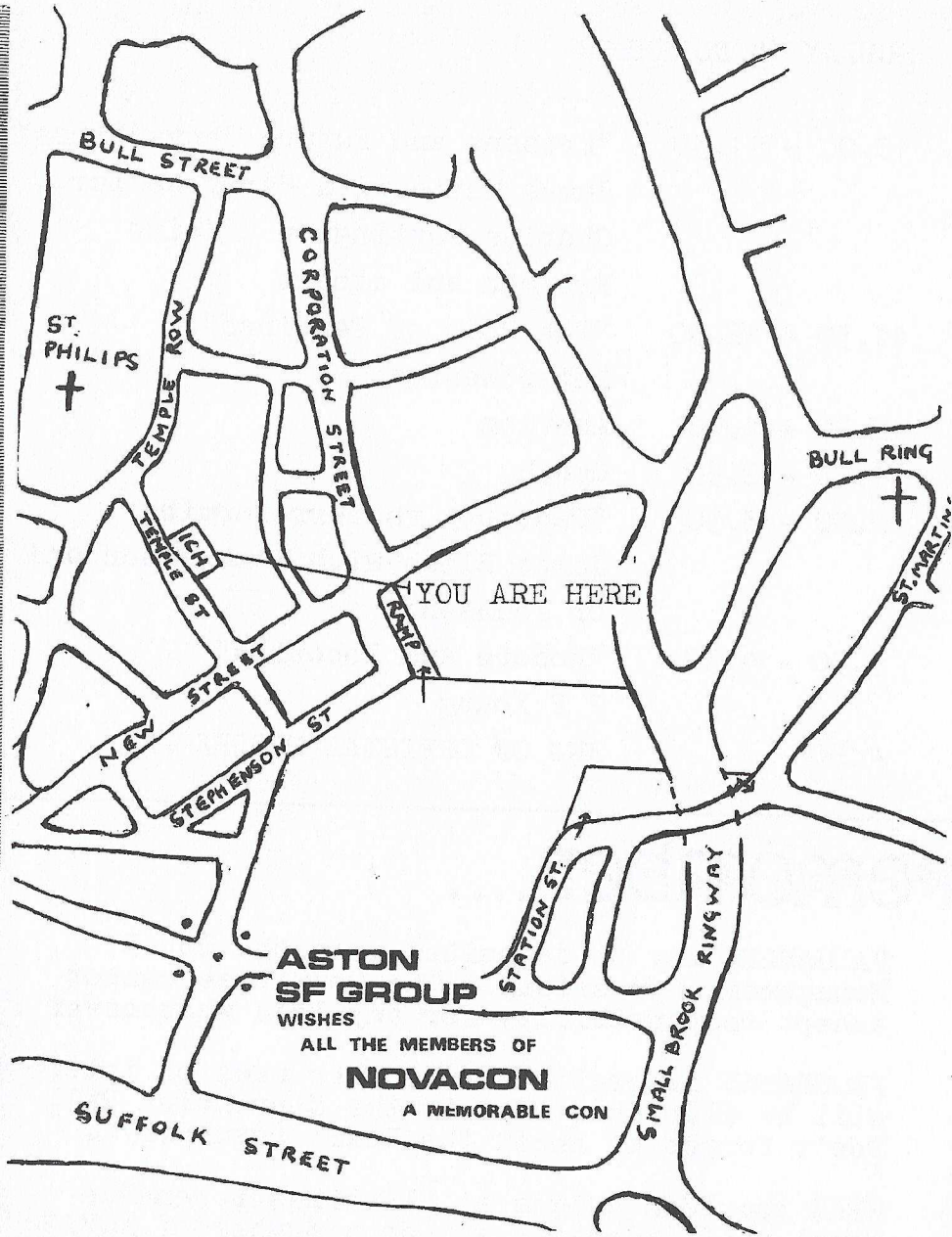
remember....

VALUABLES may be deposited with the Hotel Management for safety . The Committee cannot accept responsibility for any loss whatsoever .

PROGRAMME alterations and other news of interest will be displayed next to the Convention Hall . Don't forget to check the Board regularly .

WEAR your Con badges at all times to enable Hotel staff identify you as a member of NOVACON. The hotel is ours for the weekend - help us keep it that way .

map of the centre of the universe



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Further information available from the SCIENCE FICTION FOUNDATION table at NOVACON , or from Peter Nicholls .

only a robot...

ONLY A ROBOT

Words : John Brunner

Air: "Poor Miners Farewell" by Aunt Molly Jackson & Jerry Silverman

On-ly a robot and made out of steel , Able to think but not

ab-le to feel , Built in a fac-to-ry so tough and so strong , Your

(Fine)

joints are worn out now , poor robot , so long! The-ey

built him of steel and ti-ta-nium parts , They gave him a

brain but they gave him no heart. He's ob-so-lete now and his

D.C. al Fine

life-time is through, so robot I fear it's the scrap-yard for you !

ONLY A ROBOT Words: John Brunner

Air: "Poor Miner's Farewell" (Aunt Molly Jackson)

Only a robot and made out of steel ,
Able to think but not able to feel ,
Built in a factory so tough and so strong-
Your joints are worn out now, poor robot, so long!
They built him of steel and titanium parts,
They gave him a brain but they gave him no heart .
He's obsolete now and his lifetime is through -
So robot I fear it's the scrapyard for you!
Only an android and bred in a vat,
Only an android and faulty at that,
Made from synthetics and a gene has gone wrong-
You're clumsy and stupid , poor android, so long!
They took RNA, and DNA too,
They thought they knew just what the process must do ,
They made a mistake and they don't know quite how-
But androids with faults in we cannot allow!
Only a human and born from a womb,
Walking and talking and bound for the tomb,
Partway intelligent, surprisingly dumb-
Best watch out , poor human , your time's almost come!

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THE CON-COVER & STAMP

Although envelopes of a modern type were invented in the 18th century they did not become popular until after 1840 , when Rowland Hill introduced his postal reforms . Prior to this date letters were charged at a rate depending , among other things , the number of sheets used . An envelope could thus double the cost a a letter.

In 1840 the first adhesive postage stamps were introduced and the letter-charge became dependent on weight . As well as stamps decorated envelopes and lettersheets went on sale , the designs denoting postage . However , within a year or so they were withdrawn and stamps took over completely . To prevent re-use , handstamps came into use to obliterate the stamp .

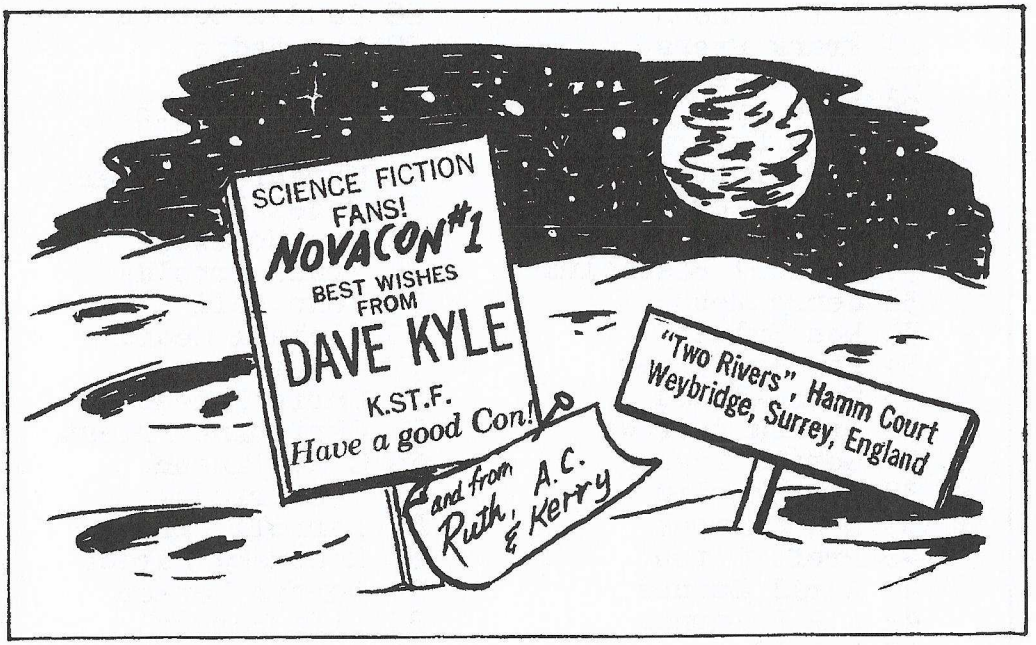
Naturally enough , as other countries followed Britains lead and produced their own stamps , people started to collect them as a hobby . The stamps were removed from the envelopes and gummed into books . Many stamps were ruined and few early envelopes remain .

Souvenir covers , that is , envelopes bearing a special postmark or pictorial design were prepared on occasion to commemorate some special event . This practice grew until nowadays there are covers produced for all kinds of things ,of both great and small import .

During this hundred odd year period , there has been no cover produced to commemorate an event in the Science Fiction field . This appears astounding (small A) when one considers the length of time that conventions have been organised in this country , let alone America .

To remedy this state of affairs , a cover with an SF design has been produced , and arrangements made with the Post Office for these to be collected and franked with a special NOVACON handstamp . An attempt was made at Eastercon 22 this year to provide a similar service , but due to the postal strike the GPO could not provide the handstamp in time .

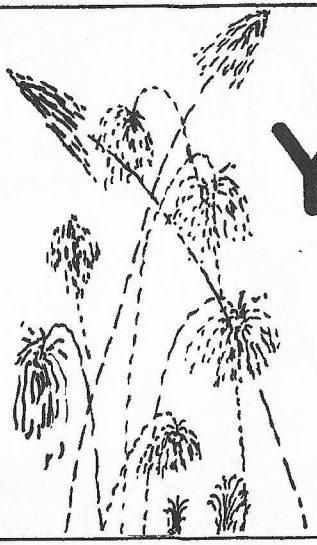
Covers are on sale on Friday and Saturday , 12&13th , and must be posted in the special postbox , bearing a 3p stamp , on Saturday . This is a chance to obtain an unique souvenir , a cover which is not only the first of its kind in the SF field , but a cover which commemorates an event which is also the first of its kind - NOVACON .



A LIST OF NOVACON MEMBERSHIP

1 James White
2 Vernon Brown
3 Peter Weston
4 Ray Bradbury
5 Carole Simpson
6 Alan Donnelly
7 Pauline E Dungate
8 Alan Denham
9 Jeff Hacker
10 Brian Hampton
11 Bob Smith
12 Mary Smith
13 David Rowe
14 Bernard Peek
15 Fred Hemmings
16 John Eggeling
17 Ted Ball
18 Dave Gibson
19 Mrs Ailsa Kelly
20 G R Pearle
21 J Bonny
22 John Griggs
23 P T Johnson
24 Frank Wyers
25 S D Steel
26 Dave Kyle
27 Ruth Kyle
28 A D Cruttendon
29 Phil Clarke
30 Mike Higgs
31 Michael Rosenblum
32 Jerry Webb
33 Ken Bulmer
34 Pamela Bulmer
35 Mark Adlard
36 Graham Andrews
37 Gerald Taylor
38 Ken Cheslin
39 D H Simmons
40 Prof. Doron
41 Avril Barnes
42 J P H Turner
43 I Roll
44 Paul Collins
45 Greg Pickersall
46 David Riley
47 George Hay
48 D G Sellars
49 Gray Boak
50 Hartley Patterson
51 A N Stephenson
52 Phil Cooper
53 John Steward
54 Peter Roberts
55 Keith Freeman
56 Wendy Freeman
57 Aldo Ferri
58 J Ward
59 Sam Long
60 Roger Peyton
61 Arline Peyton
62 Chris Bursey
63 John Piggott
64 G R Poole
65 David Sutton
66 Sandra Sutton
67 Ken Eadie
68 R Rickard
69 H Southworth
70 M Rowley
71 Margaret Palmer
72 Hazel Reynolds
73 Lee Hopewell
74 Frank Arnolds
75 John Hall
76 Michael Meara
77 P Meara
78 Chris Priest
79 Christine Priest
80 M Rawlinson
81 J Farrimond
82 Darroll Pardoe
83 Rosemary Pardoe
84 Doreen Parker
85 Ella Parker
86 Daphne Sewell

87 Charles Winstone
88 Jack Cohen
89 Anne McCaffrey
90 C J K Morgan
91 Linda Humphreys
92 Harry Nadler
93 Charles Partington
94 James Blish
95 Judy Blish
96 Michael Brain
97 Barbara Stokes
98 S A Eling
99 S Vasepury
100 K Somerfield
101 Tim Stannard
102 Doreen Humphries
103 Dave Berry
104 L R A Kettle
105 Malcolm Edwards
106 Christine Lane
107 R Mortimore
108 P H Mabey
109 Andrew Prior
110 R T Walker
111 G H Howard
112 Vic Hallett
113 John Brunner
114 Eddie Jones
115 E R Hedger
116 Mrs Hedger
117 J A Sheriff
118 R Newnham
119 S Reynolds
120 M J Walshe
121 D Bouvet
122 Muriel Lawrence
123 Jenny du Sautoy
124 Bob Shaw
125 D J Cripps
126 Brian Harrigan
127 Jeannette Bream
128 Phil Spencer
129 Norman Shorrock
130 Ina Shorrock
131 Roy Shorrock
132 Linda Shorrock
133 Norman Weedall
134 Tony Edwards
135 M Edwards
136 Mario B Bosnyak
137 Dan Morgan
138 Mrs Morgan
139 Susan Pearce
140 Jean Muggoch
141 M C R Gover
142 P E Presford
143 C Barren
144 P Nicholls

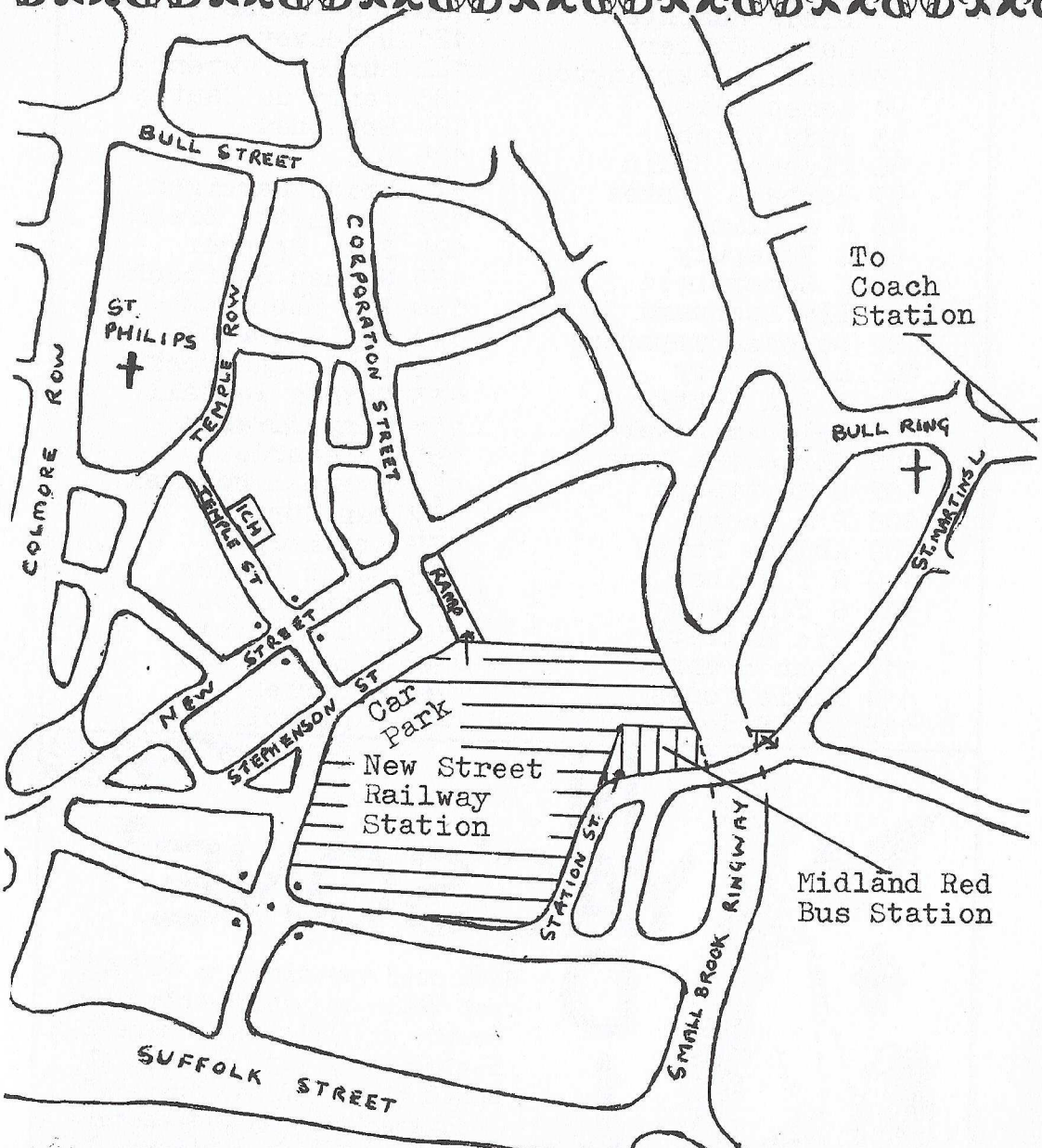
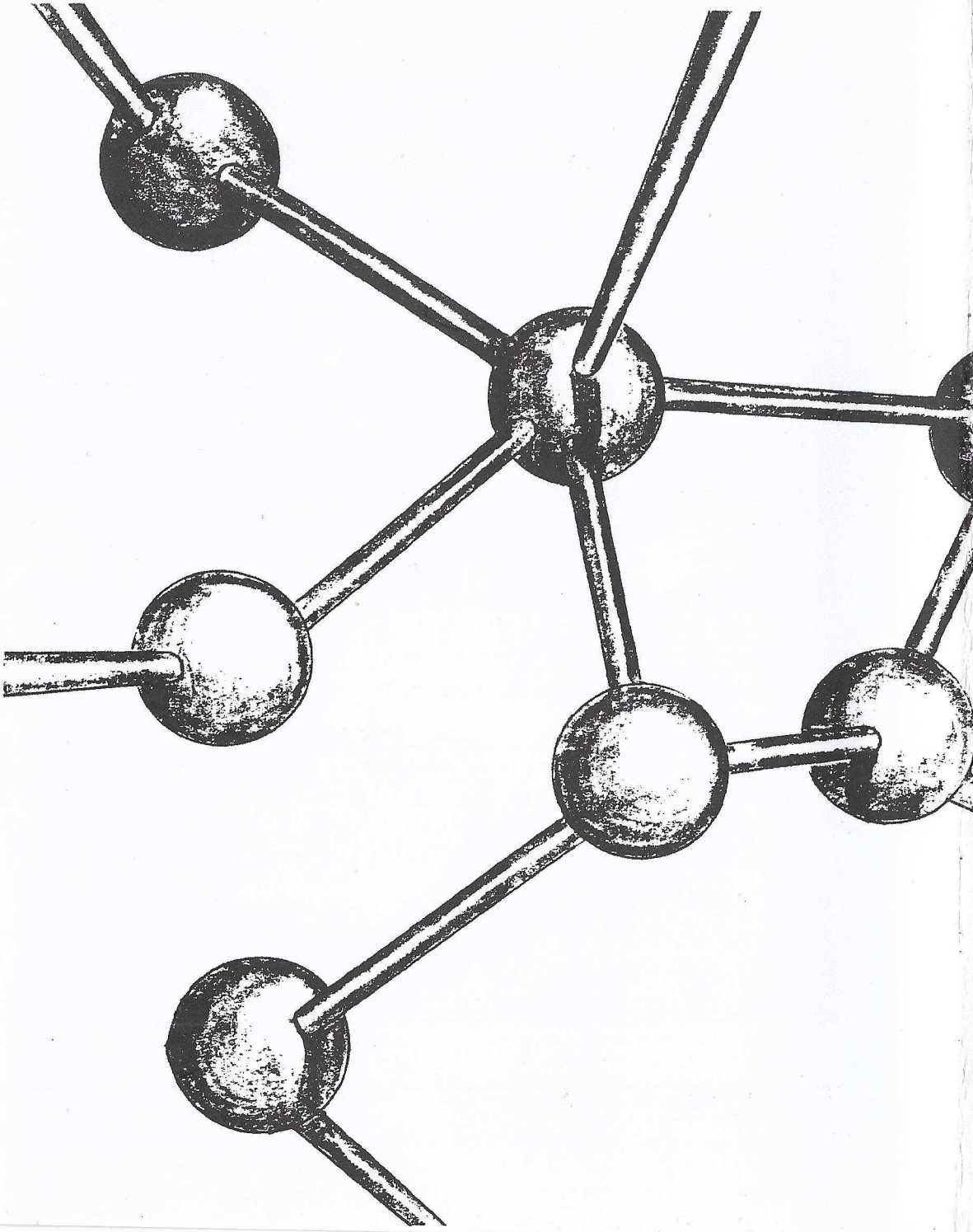


NYAC'SONE*

NADIR*

Both send greetings to NOVACON, from their suspended-animation booths at Villa Park. Here's hoping for a very successful Convention, and the birth of a new tradition in S.F.Fandom- the November Conventions.

*- Editor, Chas. Winstone.


BULL STREET
CORPORATION STREET
TEMPLE ROW
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COLMORE ROW
TEMPLE ST
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NEW STREET
STEPHENSON ST
RAMP
Car Park
New Street Railway Station
STATION ST.
SMALL BROOK RINGWAY
SUFFOLK STREET
To Coach Station
BULL RING
ST. MARTINS L
Midland Red Bus Station